



Harness, Boots & Saddles

by Lillian Knupp

JNF
KNUPP
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THE HIGHWOOD HERITAGE SERIES





THE WRITERS GUILD OF ALBERTA
11759 GROAT ROAD N.W.
EDMONTON, AB T5M 3K6

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Highwood Heritage

In the late 1870s, the first cattlemen, George Emerson and Tom Lynch, began to show an interest in this district. They were followed quickly by the bigger cattle drives and the establishment of the early ranch holdings. Trail bosses and managers usually were recruited from the United States but not all were Americans. Capital and ownership came from Eastern Canada and the United Kingdom.

The working cowboys were a mix with origins from both sides of the border. They travelled light. Their gear and bedrolls were practical, well worn, and pretty much a standard uniform, not always conforming to the "western" image of today. Their horses and saddles were of first concern to most individuals. Any veterinary or farrier work needed was done by the cowboy himself.

As the big ranches were established and stocked, enterprising individuals began to branch out for themselves, establishing smaller "spreads" of their own. Demand increased for the services of essential tradesmen. Blacksmiths, harness and saddle repairmen, bootmakers were in demand. As the area became more settled many of these people, craftsmen in their own right, began to establish outside the supply centres of Forts Calgary, Macleod and Benton, usually situating in strategic spots close to fords or trails.

In this way Spitzee Crossing, on the Highwood River, established the future site of High River. One such artisan was the bootmaker Thomas Baird.

**LILLIAN
KNUPP**
The Author



LILLIAN KNUPP, research historian, author and columnist, is the daughter and granddaughter of the first white family to settle on the south side of the Highwood. She is the winner of several literary awards, including the Historical Society of Alberta Award for outstanding contribution to Alberta history, 1985, and the prestigious Alberta Historical Resources Foundation Award of Honour for preservation of Alberta's heritage, received also in 1985. She has published books, *Life and Legends*, *High River High School Review*, *Heritage on the Highwood*, and continues to write a column in the High River Times.



Thomas Baird

Thomas Baird was born in Peebles, Scotland on February 29th, 1844. In 1871 he emigrated, settling in Woodstock, Ontario. There he continued his trade as a cobbler, his devotion to the Presbyterian church of his forefathers, his studies of the Scriptures, his interest in entomology, and in the Masonic rites. It was in Woodstock that the eldest of his seven children, Thomas, died.

Following this, and after correspondence with his friend Joseph Short who had settled on the Highwood River west of Spitzee Crossing, the little cobbler and his son David came west. The latter worked for various ranches in the area. In 1896 Thomas decided to open a shop on Macleod Trail, across from Drew's Saloon and close to The Crossing.

This weathered-looking establishment, with its false front of rusted red tin, was for years a landmark and a meeting place for friends on the site of today's Delmerie Flowers. In 1897 Baird sent for his wife and family and lived in a small house beside the shop. Later he built the residence now known as the Burrows house at 703 - 3rd Street S.W. Following the deaths of Mr. and Mrs. Baird and their daughter Pearl, it became the home of daughter Agnes and her husband Billy Henry, the legendary man whose exploits included the trek to Klondike in 1898 with Burns' cattle.

Few people today can recall the cobbler and his shop on Macleod Trail. There, surrounded by wooden lasts of all shapes and sizes, he cut and crafted boots that were hand-made throughout. Described as the finest obtainable, old-

timers recall that all Baird riding boots were either black or brown. Made of French calf leather, very tough and waterproof, the imported material was black on one side and



Mrs. Sheppard's boots.

brown on the reverse side. This gave the purchaser a choice of color.

One old record describes Baird's business philosophy as pride in honest workmanship. "He would rather lose a customer than handle leather that he did not approve. Never a shoddy piece of work was turned out of his shop."

"For over 30 years his little shop was a great local rendezvous, the haunt alike of the village intellectuals and the ranchers of the foothills," a reporter once wrote. Author Bert Sheppard, in his book *Spitsee Days*, also penned his recollections:

"For many years old Mr. Baird sat on a little oblong cobbler's bench among his rolls of leather, boot trees and butterflies. He looked old when I first saw him, as his head was bald with little tufts of white hair above each ear. He wore chin whiskers and steel rimmed spectacles and spoke with a soft Scottish burr.

"A hole had been cut in the top of the bench and covered over with leather which formed a seat, and gave one the impression of a hen's nest. The seat was left of centre, so that the tools of his trade; cobbler's hammer, knife, awls, needles, thread, bee's wax, and pig bristles which he used instead of needles when sewing the soles of boots, were on his right. His last stood on the floor near at hand."

Mr. Sheppard goes on to describe the reason for the perfection of a Baird riding boot, in the language of practicality from the viewpoint of an experienced rancher. Decades after those early visits, he could recall the technicalities:

"The fifteen inch uppers were made in two pieces. There was a steel shank thin enough so that you could feel the stirrup. The soles were hand sewn and pegged. The boots had one and three-quarter inch heels . . . optional. They were also waterproof and some of the boys, after applying a little dubbin, would wade into the creek with them fishing, without doing them any apparent harm."

He also recalls that for many years a pair of Baird riding boots cost \$8.00, finally going up to \$10.00 and the last boots he made costing \$15.00. Others recall that the first boots, in 1896, sold for several years for \$5.00 a pair.

That they were 'boy proof' is illustrated by two pair commissioned in 1919 by Harry Streeter. Made to fit two small cowboys aged 9 and 10, they were the proud possessions of Allie and Jack Streeter. A pair is pictured here, slightly restored after much hard wear.



Baird's riding boots for ladies also were in demand and Miss Ruth Maccoy has preserved these, commissioned for Mrs. H.N. Sheppard in 1922, and for Mrs. O.C. Royale earlier.

Others recall Thomas Baird for another reason. He has been described as a pioneer in the entomological field, whose painstaking work in Alberta was "of immeasurable help to later scientists." Entomologists visiting this part of the northwest invariably stopped to discuss their work with Thomas Baird who remained in constant communication with leaders in his field, and eventually a rare specimen of Canadian moth was named "*Nephrides Bairdis*" in his honor. Following his death, his collection of moths and butterflies was divided among the Smithsonian Institute, the

British Museum, and the entomological section of the Government Museum in Ottawa.

In summer evenings, as he turned to his hobby of moth catching, it was once reported that he always was followed by a troop of town youngsters who "learned much from him...and he encouraged many local students also in historical and Biblical study." One local matron recalls, whenever she showed him an acquisition for her butterfly collection, he explained and insisted she learn the Latin name.

Thomas Baird, shoemaker, scientist, historian and pioneer, died July 16, 1931 at the age of 87. He is buried in Highwood cemetery.



Mrs. Royal's boots.

Bradley's

Bradley's Western Wear is the oldest business in High River and has operated continuously since 1900 on the same site.

The Bradley family came west from Muskoka, Ontario in 1890, homesteading in the Tongue Creek area north of Spitzee Crossing (High River). While the rest of the family travelled in the relative comfort of railway passenger service, the 14 year old son Levi and a younger brother had a different mode of travel. They spent 14 days accompanying the family's belongings in a settler's effects freight car, with five heavy Clydesdale horses as companions.

At 15 Levi was driving a team, doing grade work on the railway line being built south out of Calgary. He also earned \$2.50 an acre breaking sod on prairie farms-to-be, worked on ranches, and earned the princely sum of 25¢ a day paid by contractor Pearce who was collecting and shipping buffalo bones. In between these activities, Levi attended the first school, Tongue Creek, on the north side of the Highwood.

In 1898 Levi and his younger brother John went to Calgary to learn harness making at Hutching and Riley, later known as The Great West Saddlery Co. Levi specialized in hand-sewn horse collars, John in hand-sewn harness. In 1899 Levi married Mary Patterson, who had come to Calgary in 1895 from Northampton, England, and they homesteaded near the present Bowness until moving to High River in 1902.



Meanwhile John had established a harness-making shop in High River in 1900. Located just east of the Macleod Trail, the locale later would be known as 3rd Street for many years. (Eventually, Town of High River adjusted the names of Streets and Avenues in step with other centres, and the address now is 3rd Avenue, a situation confusing to researchers studying early advertising.)

The original building, constructed by Percy Taylor, was 20 feet wide by 50 feet long. Subsequent adjustments to title resulted in additions being constructed, and the premises have had numerous renovations and expansions. In 1902 Levi bought out his brother John's interest, the business becoming known as Levi Bradley's Harness Shop.

The attached picture, taken in June 1902, shows Levi Bradley, apprentice Bert Richards and Bill Lower admiring the sidewalk under construction, the Village of High River having been incorporated and commencing its street building project in April, 1902. Displayed on the sidewalk are saddle trunks.

While Levi Bradley's early ads concentrated on "customized horse collars" his hand-made harness also was in increasing demand as settlers began to farm the adjoining prairie. In fact, that well-researched book, *Leaves From the Medicine Tree*, states, "The Bradley hand-stitched horse collars, harness and halters were in great demand from Quebec to Alaska."

Wages were infinitesimal by today's standards, yet by

1910 Levi Bradley had built an attractive two-storey home in which six sons and two daughters were raised. Perhaps the secret of the success of Bradley's Harness Shop lies as much in meticulous attention to detail of costing, as it does in quality of workmanship. An early account book of 1906 lists the quality, specifications and cost of every item, almost inch by inch, going into a set of harness. Leather was



Levi Bradley

bought by the pound, allowance made to the ounce for waste in cutting. In August, 1906 a No. 1 set of double driving harness cost \$29.80 to make, allowing \$6.75 for the workman's time, and sold for \$38.00. The less elaborate set cost \$27.44 (allowing for \$5.50 worth of work time) and sold for \$35.00.

Prices for work harness was higher by 1910, Thomas Henry's costing him \$55.00, but that included all brass trimming. Thomas Ereman's Boston coach harness cost him \$65.00 that year, and included his initials on the blinds.

Team bridles, $\frac{7}{8}$ with face piece, short check over hame, box loop and Concord blinds required $3\frac{1}{2}$ pounds of leather at 45¢ a pound. The blinds cost 60¢, 1 pair team fronts 22¢, buckles 12¢, 2 dozen $\frac{3}{8}$ nickle spots 18¢ and one other item (possibly thread) 5¢. All this required half a day labor at 30¢ an hour for a total of \$1.50, bringing the cost up to \$4.27 for a real fancy product.

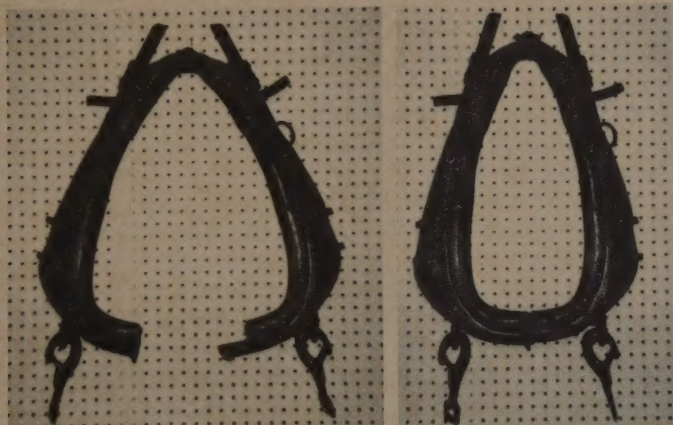
The amazing thing about the early record books is the short time required for production of the finished product. Mr. Chanel's set of nickel trimmed double democrat harness, ordered June 20th, 1905 was ready for him on July 10th, for which he paid \$38.00. Bradley's also was doing repairs, and an article promised for a certain day also noted the specific hour when the customer would be in town.

All entries are marked "Made" and crossed out, with a few stating "Paid in Cash". Those were the days when down payments might be made, but most bills were paid once a year.

One item listed in 1905 is for washing, blacking oil and soap for a pair of matched driving harness. Soap, oil and soda cost 30¢ but the job took seven hours. This, at 40¢ an hour, brought the total cost to \$3.10.

Chaps for the cowboy were slightly more expensive by comparison. A Mr. Skidmore's outfit, ordered November 19th for Christmas, a pair of calf skin fronted chaps lined with sheep skin, set him back \$16.00.

There is no record of J. Bradley's fee for an "aster can" (Astrakhan?) coat, 20 inch shoulder, 27 inch arm, ordered the same day. Possibly he was getting it wholesale from one



of the suppliers. The firm, however, charged him \$29.00 for his accompanying order of harness less collars.

One very early order was for a dray harness for the Village. While the order was placed in November, delivery was to be made in February of the following year — the date when the Village was expected to become a Town. The cost was \$30.00 and the drayman obviously was thinking ahead.

This brought speculation as to why Town Fathers had not ordered their new fire horse harness locally, to discover the specially constructed harness and collars were patented and came with the engine.

One of the original fire horse collars is pictured, together with one of Levi Bradley's custom-made collars.

Eventually the business would go into more assembly-line buying, but a steady trade continued in this as well as repair work. The original Bradley horse collars were popular not only for their fit but also because of the waterproof quality of their padding of long stemmed rye straw. The Bradley men recall that, as young boys, they would be required to search neighboring rye fields for suitable straw, as the old collars came in for repair.

With the heavy demand for harness which accompanied the rapid influx of homesteaders and farm land speculators

it was inevitable that competition would be established in the rapidly expanding harness trade.

One of these was the High River Harness Shop. In reality this was operated by Great West, the successor to Calgary-based Hutchings and Riley. Their policy, during the rapid settlement in southern Alberta, had been to expand in-



17 M Bradley Wages.

6	3 days work.	1st	6.00
" 13	6. " "	2nd	12.00
20	6. " "	3rd	12.00
27	6. " "	4th	12.00
Feb 3	6. " "	"	12.00
10	6. " "	"	12.00
17	6. " "	"	10.00
24	6. " "	10 hrs.	13.00
	Over time 4 hrs.		1.00
Mar 3	6 days 10 hrs.		13.00
	over time 4 hrs		1.00
10	6 day.		13.00
	over time		1.00
17	6 day.		13.00
14	1 " "		2.00
			<u>2.00</u>

M. L. Hitt.

24	6 days	10.00
31	6 " "	12.00
		1.00
		<u>23.00</u>

FROM SALE CATALOGUE



LUMBER HARNESS

Bridle 7-8 in. checks concord or pigeon style.

7-8 in. checks to hames.

Lines 1 1-8 in. good weight lines and cross checks.

Hames, heavy steel, plain.

Hame straps 1 1-8 in., sewn loops.

Back bands 2 in. with 1½ in. billets and belly bands.

Pole straps and Martingales 2 in.

3 ply ring style and heel chain harness with three rows of stitching; no pieces in these traces.

5 ring style breeching. All strap work 1 1-8 in.

Complete, less collars ----- \$57.00

Our harness is made up to the standard and not a price proposition. We find that the best policy is to use only the best leather. A well experienced man makes this harness.

HEAVY FARM HARNESS

Bridles 7-8 in. checks, concord or pigeon style, less checks.

Lines 1 1-8 in. heavy steel, double at cross checks.

Hame straps 1 in., sewn loops.

Back bands 2 in., with 1½ in. billets and belly bands.

2 in. 3-ply ring style traces with 3 rows of stitching.

7 link heel chain and ring at pad.

Pole strap and martingale 1½ in.

Breeching 5 ring style. All strap work 1 in.

Complete, less collars ----- \$54.00

If our harness is not up to the mark in quality and style as ordered, ship it back at our expense.

to the small new communities and the High River store was situated one block south of Bradley's Harness Shop, on what is now Fourth Avenue West. Bob Ballard was the manager but the operation was short-lived. Large close-out sale ads appear in the High River Times in late 1910. Ballard continued to work for Great West as a travelling salesman.

Evidently the parent company had trained its apprentices well, and local buyers preferred to patronize their own.

Henderson's Business Directory for 1909 lists three saddle makers in High River that year. This third shop was Bill Lower's, and operated on the east side of the railway tracks until bought out by Levi Bradley in October, 1919.



CANADIAN PACIFIC R'Y. CO.'S TELEGRAPH TELEGRAM

FORM T. D. 1 M.

All Messages are received by this Company for transmission, subject to the terms and conditions printed on their Blank Form No. 2, which terms and conditions have been agreed to by the sender of the following message. This is an unrepeat message, and is delivered by request of the sender under these conditions.

J. McMILLAN, Manager Telegraphs, Montreal.

7 CR RA. G. 11.33= 18.

12 PAID.

Wayne, Alta, Oct. 18th, 1920.

Levi
Tini Bradley,

High River, Alta.

Duplicate my order for saddle stirrup inch larger rush order
Ralph Cod,

Pete Lagrande.



William H. Lower, a harness maker from Quebec, opened his shop in 1903. Located on the east side of the railway track, at a time when there was no crossing on what is now Third Avenue, it attracted considerable patronage from the many homesteaders from the country east of High River.



Lower's Saddle Shop



Bill Lower in his shop

Lower's shop was situated strategically adjacent to Moore's Blacksmith Shop, A.W.H. Thompson's General Store, Dan (later Senator) Riley's Real Estate office and Irving's Livery Barn and corrals.

With the coming of the railway to High River in 1892 no agreement had been reached for a street crossing at present Third Avenue. This resulted in almost two town's developing, with doctors, churches, restaurants, hotels and homes being established on both sides. While the merchants on the west side had the advantage of earlier established business relations with the ranchers of the foothills country, the east side was accessible to an expanding farm market. From 1908



STREET SCENE

*East of tracks, old business section on
the site of the present gas co. office and
salvation army.*



*Lower's Harness
Shop Interior*

to 1910 the shopping area from Buffalo Hills to the east, and north almost to the Bow River concentrated on High River for its supplies.

For a time Lower had as partner his brother-in-law Dunsmoor. Their early signs refer to harness-making and saddles. Unfortunately records have been lost, but it is recalled that saddles were repaired but not made at the shop until about 1917 when Claude B. Mills was employed. Most saddles at that time were purchased wholesale from Great West, the local trade concentrating more heavily on harness making.

In a Bill of Sale of 1919 Levi Bradley agreed to pay Bill Lower \$1450.00 for his business. This included "four hundred pounds of harness leather or more at the July prices in city of Calgary of not more than 73¢ a pound" plus appraisal of all stock as of the 17th of November. The stock, listed at a total value of \$753.85, included the following:

<i>1 best whip rack</i>	<i>18.00</i>
<i>1 saddle rack</i>	<i>12.25</i>
<i>2 harness racks</i>	<i>24.50</i>
<i>set shelves</i>	<i>30.00</i>
<i>1 counter shoe case</i>	<i>8.50</i>
<i>2 blanket racks</i>	<i>20.00</i>
<i>1 harness dipping tank</i>	<i>9.00</i>
<i>1 splitting machine</i>	<i>35.00</i>
<i>1 rounder</i>	<i>4.50</i>
<i>1 creasing machine</i>	<i>30.00</i>
<i>1 stapling machine</i>	<i>20.00</i>
<i>1 punching machine</i>	<i>18.00</i>
<i>1 champion harness machine</i>	<i>350.00</i>
<i>1 gas engine 1½ horse power</i>	<i>75.00</i>
<i>1 rope cutter</i>	<i>5.00</i>
<i>20 imperial harness hooks</i>	<i>17.00</i>
<i>7 wire harness racks (double)</i>	<i>5.60</i>
<i>11 wire harness racks (single)</i>	<i>8.80</i>
<i>8 wire harness racks</i>	<i>6.40</i>
<i>a saddle rack</i>	<i>3.50</i>
<i>1 spating machine</i>	<i>18.50</i>

<i>1 trace trimmer</i>	<i>13.80</i>
<i>1 show maker stand</i>	<i>3.00</i>
<i>1 counter scale</i>	<i>9.00</i>
<i>1 crouper former</i>	<i>4.00</i>
<i>1 granite stone slab</i>	<i>4.50</i>
	<i>753.85</i>

W.L. / L.B.

In return, Bill Lower agreed "not to directly or indirectly engage in harness making within a radius of fifteen miles of High River," with Bradley agreeing not to "engage in the Vulcanizing business within the next twelve months" nor handle tires or Automobile equipment so long as Lower were engaged in that business.

Actually, the records indicate that both Lower and Mills then worked for Bradley, although only briefly. Bill Lower opened a small shop in the building back of Quon's grocery store, which old-timers remember as being used as a morgue by Alf Kelly during the influenza epidemic. Kelly then converted the tiny shop into McLaughlin automobile repair unit. It was here that Bill Lower opened his second business venture, mostly manufacturing canvas hoods and side-windows for the open touring cars of the day, and repairing binder canvas.

Bill Lower also was an amateur photographer of considerable merit, sharing his hobby with professional photographer Ray Lane. Many of the early glass negatives depicting pioneer scenes of Calgary and High River were salvaged in later years from the attic of Bill Lower's garage, and have found their way into the archives which preserve local history.

Claude B. Mills

Claude B. Mills was born across the border in the U.S.A. He was raised on a ranch, was well educated in the ways and means of the ranchers' needs. In 1912 he is recorded as entering the bronc riding competitions at Calgary Stampede. In the same year, it is believed, he took out a homestead in southern Alberta, in the Pincher Creek area, but gave this up after a short time.

His first appearance in High River district was at the Snowden ranch, where he broke saddle horses which were to go to the Archie and Ward Dick's family.

In 1917 and 1918, while working full time for Bill Lower, he became interested in saddle making. In those years, only repairs were being done locally to saddles, most of which were brought in by High River Trading Company, Bradley's Harness Shop, and Lower's Harness Shop.

High River Trading Company sold the popular D.E. Walker saddle by Visalia, the price being about \$1.00 a pound. Most saddles at that time weighed about 35 to 45 pounds and usually were quite plain in design.

During Mills' later employment with Bradley he became interested not only in production of hand-made saddles but also in adding a bit of decorative leather work. The boys coming back to the farms from World War 1 were beginning to order saddles of their own. While harness was still in demand, the trend was towards mechanization of farm work, and the era of the bronc rider was beginning.

While with Bradley's, Mills built many rough out sad-

dles on the Passall and Montana trees, although the Tipton and Portland were favored as well. It became fashionable to have the individual's brand or initials on the back of the cantle.

Until the adoption of the standard Association saddle, most contestants, while allowed variations in personal preference, favored saddles with a short seat, 13 to 14 inches, with 15 inch swells, full dished cantles five inches high, and narrow gullets as most of the early Indian ponies and thoroughbreds used in competition were narrow withered. Most saddles were ordered plain or with corner stamping, with split fenders and narrow steel or wood stirrups.

Bradley's order book for 1920 reads like a rodeo Hall of Fame record. In Mills' handwriting is listed the measurements and requirements according to the preference of each rider: Harry Gladstone, Ralph Robinson, Harry Weinard, J.S. Jacobs, Dan Ryan, Wm. Bailey, Monty Allwood, Shorty Moreno, Johnny Lefthand, R.B. Estes, George McIntosh, Pete Legrandeur, Hanson Bear Paw.

Most saddles sold for \$110.00. Special designs could bring the price as high as \$135.00.

In 1921 Mills took his orders and opened a small shop up the street, first on 4th Street, later a few doors east of Bradley's. He developed his saddle designs into full flower stamped work. In addition he produced Angora and shotgun style chaps, as well as the then popular bat wing chaps.

CLAUDE B. MILLS

- :-

FIRST CLASS

Harness and Saddlery. Mexican
Hand Carving and Burnt Leather
Work To Order.

Originator and Maker of the
"Mill's Special Saddle."

Mills put out a catalogue and developed a substantial trade until the depression put a dent in the demand for such luxuries. In the early 1930s Claude Mills closed his saddle shop. For the next few years he worked as farm manager for the Round T Ranch.

In 1936 Claude Mills was back in business in High River with the purchase of Chapman's shoe repair business. With the Oilfields to the west producing steadily, there had been considerable demand for sturdy work boots and the "leather" business had taken another change.

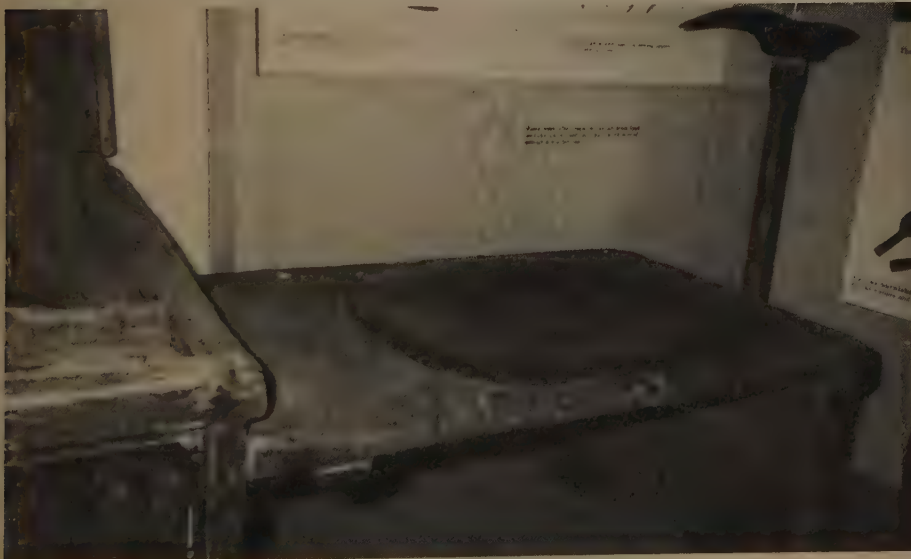
Mills never lost his interest in leather work and some recall him operating out of his garage during the Depression years. After his purchase of the shoe repair business, which he operated out of a building rented from Dr. Bedingfield on Third Avenue West, he would on occasion do guide work for Ellison Capers and Guy Weadick on their pack trips into the mountains.

Mills hired two experienced tradesmen in boot making, Mike Krat and Felmer Eamor. Business was good, and the

two young employees persuaded him, in 1942, that the time had come to retire. They bought him out.

Claude Mills returned to the United States, settling in Seattle. There he opened a saddlery and leather goods business, making equipment for the American army.

It is interesting that today Claude Mills' daughter carries on the family tradition, making saddles and equipment for a nearby riding school.



Photos taken in High River Museum showing bench and tools used for leatherwork.

More About Bradley's

When Claude Mills went into business for himself in late 1921, Bradley hired an American saddle maker, Dan Horner. Horner's had been a well known name in the craft in the United States, operating out of Hespero, Oregon until a flood had wiped out the business. Horner was a very good craftsman, and continued with Bradley for some time.

Then came the Depression.

With the retirement of Claude Mills, Levi Bradley became the only saddler and harness maker in High River. Records show that during the depression years, from 1930 through wartime to 1945, only six saddles and 10 sets of harness were made.

However, one slight benefit from the "Dirty Thirties" was a slow-down in the trend towards mechanization. On

many farms, even the cars were put into storage, or converted into Bennett Buggies, to be pulled by horse power. Horses required harness. While Bradley's harness of earlier days had been made to last, harness still required repairing.

Also, in 1927, when ill health had forced retirement of the elderly shoemaker Thomas Baird, Levi Bradley had purchased all Baird's shoe hand tools and equipment. Securing the services of a Hungarian immigrant named John Iwanowich, the shoe-making business had been added to the firm's output. The flourishing oil boom in Turner Valley had created a demand for sturdy work boots, in addition to the riding boot trade.

Bradley managed to successfully weather the hard years between 1930 and 1945.





High River's Shoemaking History

As has been written earlier, High River's first shoemaker was the scholarly Thomas Baird, whose hand-made riding boots were made in the tiny shop on Macleod Trail; a shop which also was a meeting place and scene for discussions among visiting ranchmen and townsmen alike.

When failing health forced Baird to retire and Levi Bradley bought his building and equipment, it was this new venture which would help bring Bradley through the difficult years of the Depression. Securing the services of an experienced craftsman from Hungary, a market was found in the oil fields west of High River for sturdy work boots.

John Iwanowich then worked for a while with Phil Chapman before going to Calgary and starting his own business, The Bespoke Shop. This was a reference in his native language to the word "cobbler". It was here, later, that Felmer Eamor would learn the bootmaking craft.

Phil Chapman's High River shop was located on what is now Fourth Avenue, with repair shops operating in the Oilfields area. The Fourth Avenue shop opened about 1928. In 1932 he moved to Third Avenue, across the street from Bradley's shop.

Bradley meanwhile had acquired the services of another experienced immigrant shoemaker, Steve Koteles. While with Bradley, Steve Koteles was joined by his brother John Koteles. Later Steve returned to his native land. Lou Bradley having joined his father's business, he and John then decided to branch out on their own. Thus K and B

Boot was established in Nanton, and continued to operate under that name after Lou Bradley left. John Koteles' son eventually joined him in the business. Koteles sr. died in 1986.

Bradley had a number of shoe-makers with him, some of whom eventually opened small businesses of their own. These included Andy Maxim, Alex Augustine, Gil Garon.

In the early 1930s Chapman was bought out by Claude Mills and moved to "Little New York". Mills operated a boot and saddle shop in a building on the north side of Third Avenue, owned by Dr. Bedingfield. This later would become the site of High River's first museum. Employees in Mills' saddle and boot-making shop included Mike Krat and Felmer Eamor who later bought him out, continuing for a time as bootmakers. Later James Bell and Jerome Durand would become shoemakers for the new partnership.

Eventually Alex Augustine left Bradley's to open his own shop, buying out Eamor's bootmaking business and locating on Fourth Avenue. Here he did more repair work than riding boot making, although his hand-made "gaiters" or half Wellingtons were in some demand. These, ever since the days of Baird, had been popular with ranchmen for dress occasions, rather than their work-a-day cowboy boots.

Eventually Gil Garon, who had been working for Bradley's, started up on his own, continuing to make a few boots until his death. This ended the boot-making industry in High River.

Now stores and western outlets carry hundreds and hundreds of factory built riding boots. Styles, material, and prices can reach the "exotic" range.

Lou Bradley recalls that the price of riding boots in High River has risen over the years according to the following generalization:

In 1900 to 1920 hand made boots were around \$10.00.

In 1930 to 1940 riding boots of very high style and made

to measure sold in a range of \$25.00 to \$30.00.

By 1945 they were being made for around \$45.00.

In 1985, they were costed at \$250.00 basic and up.

Styled somewhat differently today from the high-heeled boot suitable for a saddle stirrup, "cowboy" boots now are worn by everyone from executives to truck drivers, not only for their glamour but also for their comfort.



*Chest and tools
on display in
High River
Museum.*

Harness and Saddlery

We manufacture all our own
Stock Saddles and Harness.

• • •

Dealer in Trunks, Bags, Mitts,
Gloves, Tents, Etc.

L. BRADLEY

Following discharge from the Armed Forces, two sons, Lou and Fred, joined Levi Bradley in a three-way partnership in 1945.

Prior to World War 2, both had been involved in the business, Fred more indirectly in with a Calgary firm.

Lou, following completion of his schooling, had entered the family business to learn the trade at a time when the business was concentrating heavily on shoe-making. With another Bradley employee, John Koteles, the decision was made to open a store in the neighboring town of Nanton. Working at any odd jobs after hours, taking contracts to stook farmer's fields, the two young men gathered together sufficient money "to print a catalogue and open shop," to

Bradley's Men's Wear and Leather Works

quote Lou Bradley. That this took considerably more effort than the casual remark implies is, perhaps, indicated in a paragraph of that first catalogue of K-B Boot Co., Makers of Made-To-Measure Boots and Shoes, Nanton, Alberta, 1935-36.

Following the introductory description of the merits of their custom-made products, and the German calf and Australian kangaroo leathers available, the catalogue has the following canny note:

"This catalogue has cost us fifty cents a piece, besides considerable time putting it together. We would greatly appreciate it if you would share this with your friends."



The new business also sold the Lee Robinson Roper Saddle (plain, \$67.00; Full Flower Stamped, \$76.00) and a line of leather accessories and ropes.

Lou Bradley left the firm in 1939, joining the Canadian Army Ordinance Corps.

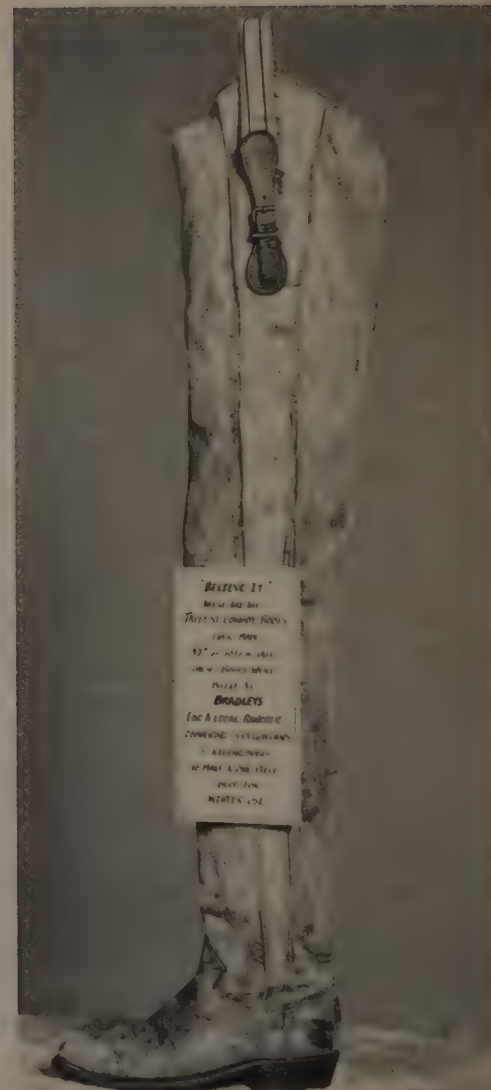
Following formation of the 1945 father and sons partnership it was obvious a new direction, other than harness making, must be taken. The firm re-entered the saddlemaking trade and began the era of trained craftsmen in this occupation. Many future saddle makers of note worked in the upper storey of Bradley's shop, Bob Lyons, Art Robelard, Hal Caton and Arnold Smith being only a few who later went on to establish their own businesses and reputations.

Since the early beginnings of Bradley's Harness Shop, as demand for one line of production would decline with changing times, emphasis had always been placed on flexibility and progress. In early days a retail business in trunks, blankets, gloves, horse medicine had naturally developed. The new partnership decided to build more heavily on what had previously been a sideline. Pooling their talents, the three partners enlarged their stock to include western clothing and a full line of children's shoes and men's work boots.

While Levi Bradley kept an active working interest in the business until six years before his death, he now had time to indulge in his interests of big game hunting and horsemanship. In 1952, at the age of 78, he made his last trip into the foothills to hunt big game. The same year he broke his last saddle horse. He died in 1958.

Lou, who had bought out his brother Fred's interest in 1954, became the sole owner, going into a full line of Western items. Lou Bradley's ability as a community-minded worker had been illustrated during his short business career in Nanton. On his return to High River his dedication to community development and promotion went into high gear.

Prominent among the long list of community promotion is the revival of local rodeos and the production locally of Canada's first Little Britches rodeo. Not only was the



PAGE FROM SALE CATALOGUE

Shoe Repairing Price List

RIDING BOOTS

New double ply vamps, any leather, counters, new welts,
full soles (sewn) and new heels, and insoles -- \$12.00

Above work, only nailed sole ----- \$ 9.50

Where vamps are good, and new insoles, welts,
soles and heels wanted

Sewn Soles ----- \$ 8.00

Nailed Soles ----- \$ 6.75

New welts, soles (full) and new heels

Sewn ----- \$ 3.75

Nailed ----- \$ 3.25

$\frac{3}{4}$ Soles, sewn ----- \$ 2.00

$\frac{3}{4}$ Soles, nailed ----- \$ 1.75

New Heels, any style or height ----- \$ 1.75

New Lifts, either leather or rubber ----- \$.50

Prices on Repairing Men's and Women's Shoes

Women's

Half Soles, sewn -- \$1.15

Half Soles, cement \$1.00

Half Soles, nailed \$.90

Rubber Heels ---- \$.35

Leather Heels ---- \$.25

Men's

Full Soles & Heels \$2.30

Full Soles, sewn -- \$1.90

Half Soles, sewn -- \$1.40

Half Soles, nailed -- \$1.15

Rubber Heels ---- \$.40

Leather Heels ---- \$.50



INSTRUCTIONS FOR MEASUREMENTS

When seated, place your right foot on back of this chart, with heel of foot at place marked "heel." With a pencil held erect, trace all around your foot; this determines the width and length.

Now tear off tape on this chart and take the measurements as shown on fig. 1, making sure the tape is in the right place and not wrinkled. Measure over weight of each usually worn. If possible have someone take these measurements, while you are seated. Place tape around where big and little toes join, pull the tape around these joints to desired fit, this gives ball measurements. Then draw your tape around low instep at joint, just below high instep measure. Then measure about one inch above the point all around foot for high instep. Then pull tape around back part of heel just under ankle and over where foot bends. This gives all foot measurements. Now foot height of tops, measure from bottom of heel, up to desired height, and at this point take calf measurement, over pant legs.

For high or low shoes, measure same as above, only give measurement, by placing tape around leg, about one and half inches above ankle. Give height of top wanted, and give calf measurement. Check and re-check all measurements, before you send them to sources you of a good fit.

BRADLEY'S LEATHER STORE, High River, Alta.

Enclosed find Money Order or Cheque for \$16.50 (No for boots 50% for ready)

Modeling - Top of boot Leather Page _____
 Height of top wanted, scalloped 13 inch
 Round or Square Tops, scalloped Round
 Kind of Leather Blue Kid Tops Black Box Calf Vamps
 Weight of Leather _____
 Heavy or Light Soles light
 Rubber or Leather Lifts Rubber
 Well Rounded, Medium or Light Shank medium
 Height of Heel 2 inch Full Understitching
 High or Low Counters High
 Round or Square Toes Round
 Wrinkled or Plain Toes wrinkled
 Your Approximate Weight 90 lbs.
 Whether a snug, medium or loose fit wanted medium
 Size of shoe usually worn 6 1/2 or 6 A width
 Color of Silk Thread Blue or Red
 Extras _____
 Your name and address in full, trying nearest _____

FIGURE 1

Ball 8 1/2 inches
 Low instep 8 1/2"
 High instep 8 1/2"
 Heel 11"
 Ankle (for shoes only) 12 inch
 Calf or Top 13 inch
 Height of Leg or Top 13 inch



Boot orders came from all over by mail. This order had an outline of the foot traced on back of form.



Inside
Bradley's
store today.

preservation of the ranch heritage theme beneficial to the community. It also was a valuable asset in promoting the business which handled the trappings of the Western image. Bradley's Western Wear not only became well known locally; it also developed an international reputation. In preserving local history, the business also ensured self-preservation.

Just as Levi Bradley's made-to-measure riding boots had been receiving orders from the Cariboo country in 1910, in 1956 one of the highlights of an interview with Levi Bradley on his 80th birthday was reading a letter from a taxi driver on the Gold Coast, Africa asking for a catalogue of Bradley's Western Wear.

There is a highly developed traditional trait among ranch people, in that once they find a product to their liking they remain loyal to that style. There may be variations in trim, but the basic pattern remains the same. Manufacturers may disappear, but the name of their product is firmly fixed in the mind of the buyer. Hence a cowboy hat is not known as such. It remains a stetson. For a time Bradley's line of headwear had the names the Highwood and the Willow Creek models for the 3 and 3½ inch brims respectively, called by Guy Weadick. But stetsons they remained, in the minds of the buying public.

There may have been a slightly chauvenistic tone to Bradley's "Men's Wear and Leather Goods" catalogues of the early 1950s, but Lou Bradley was quick to recognize that women, too, were interested in Western Wear. The store has become "the" place for one-stop buying of Western items, with people from all parts of Alberta making annual visits to purchase their riding boots and other supplies.

In 1974 Lou took in two junior partners, David and Margaret Fraser. Both had been working with him for some time. Raised on a ranch, and with their father and three other brothers, frequent winners in the family riding class at horse shows, they have the genuine background for involvement in such a business.

In 1978 the brother and sister Fraser partnership bought the entire Western Wear business, leaving Lou Bradley as owner of the building and property which has been in his

family name since the beginning of the century.

Jay Bradley, great-grandson of Levi, is a member of the staff. David Fraser in his spare time is actively involved with High River Agricultural Society and the Cutting-Horse Society. Margaret Fraser, who manages the business end, is a designer of women's western wear for an American company, as well as designing the costumes worn annually by the Calgary Stampede Queen and Princesses. She, too, is involved in community activities, including Little Britches Rodeo and Chamber of Commerce.

Lou and Anita Bradley maintain they now "live in retirement". While heavily involved in community promotion, including the local Carriage and Cutter club and their tours and trail rides, Lou recently developed a new hobby.

He made — what else? — a set of driving harness. However, unlike the days of Levi Bradley's Harness Shop, Lou maintains total time spent on the project was close to 12 months. However, the family tradition lives on. Lou's grandson, about to graduate from grade 12, will be apprenticing with High River's remaining craftsman in hand-made saddles, Matt Eberle.



Eamor's Saddlery

Felmer Eamor first apprenticed as a shoemaker and repairman in 1938, in the Calgary shop owned by John Iwanowich. This was located next to Eaton's store. It was during the height of the Depression and the shop was specializing in hand made figure skating boots. Wages were \$1.00 a day. Eventually this was doubled.

Eamor returned to High River and worked for a short time for Claude Mills, before leasing one of Chapman's boot repair shops in the Oilfields. This one was located at "Little Chicago" (Royalties). Like "Little New York" near Longview, both hamlets have disappeared.

After working at Royalties for some time, Eamor returned to High River, again working for Claude Mills. In 1943 Eamor and fellow boot-maker Mike Krat went into partnership and purchased the Mills saddle and shoe shop.

Mike Krat died in January, 1945, leaving Eamor sole owner of the business which would become known as Eamor's Leather Works. He carried on operations in the Bedingfield building on Third Avenue South, expanding his retail lines from time to time.

Following the end of the war he employed James Bell, followed by Jerome Durand who worked for three years. Bob Lyon was another valued worker. At this time Eamor became increasingly interested in concentrating on saddle making and eventually Alex Augustine, another European craftsman of merit who had been working at Bradley's, bought out the boot making part of Eamor's business.

In the late 1940's one of Eamor's hand-crafted saddles,



"The Pride of the Prairie"

One of the first Show Saddles

with elaborate floral design and gold embossed on silver heavy trim, was on display in the Hudson's Bay in Calgary and attracted considerable attention. Today such a saddle is valued at \$75,000.00. At the time Eamor considered it a year's hobby work, separate from the more mundane retail line of leather goods and plainer saddles.

Eamor recalls the late Carl Hagen as an outstanding floral designer and stamper in his employ, and Pierce was the silversmith at about the same time. Jim Olsen, who now operates his own distinctive silversmith factory and retail outlet in High River in partnership with son Rod and daughter Denise Fraser, remembers seeing a picture of the Eamor Pride of the Prairie saddle which persuaded him to come to High River and join the saddle-making operation.

In 1963 Eamor purchased the old Astoria Annex on Fourth Avenue and developed a factory assembly line operation in saddle making, always stressing hand made craftsmanship and quality. Jim Olsen became foreman the following year, the factory employing 29 people. Each week 48 to 50 saddles were produced along with hundreds of pieces of tack. The business operated under the name of Eamor's Saddlery Corporation Ltd.

After Jim Olsen's departure a saddle-maker apprentice, Henry Friesen, became foreman, eventually leaving to open his own business in Moose Jaw, Saskatchewan. Another Eamor apprentice, Rusty Wallace, followed Friesen as foreman and now operates his own shop in Nanton.

In 1972 the Alberta Government purchased the Astoria premises, building the present government building on the site. Eamor built a new factory east of the railway on Elevator Row in 1973. When the business was sold in 1975, Eamor's Saddlery had built a total of 17,000 saddles during the 11 years of its operation as an assembly-line production. Four Calgary business men purchased and continued the business.

During these years Eamor never lost his interest in specialty saddles and had a long list of noteworthy customers for these items. In addition to prominent oil men,

his custom saddles have been purchased by the McGuire Sisters, Prince Rainier of Monaco, the Aga Khan's family in Paris, and, to quote him "Hundreds of outstanding ranchers and cowboys."

Most of the well known cowboy artists of the Highwood country own Eamor saddles and use them as models for their bronzes. That Felmer Eamor has a great respect for the local ranchmen is evident. In a recent interview, speaking of making a saddle for veteran rancher Bert Sheppard, Eamor said, "I consulted him every step of the way. I learned more about saddle making from Bert Sheppard than I ever learned anywhere else."

Which likely is no small part of the secret of his success.

Now living in British Columbia, where son Brent continues to produce saddles of the quality he learned as an apprentice in High River, Felmer Eamor maintains he is in retirement. However, it is noted the letterhead of Triple E Custom Saddlery also carries Felmer Eamor's name as well as those of sons Stuart and Brent. Eamors' continued to provide trophy saddles for many cowboy associations, including the C.R.C.A. for at least 15 consecutive years while in High River.



Jim Olson when working as a saddlemaker for Eamor in the old Bedingfield building.

What does Felmer Eamor do as a hobby? Last year he made a set of show harness for a six horse team in the United States.

Nostalgically, he expresses a desire to return to High River. After all, for several decades it was known as the Saddle Capital of the West,



Felmer Eamor in his earlier days as a saddlemaker.





Matt Eberle Saddlery

Matt Eberle, situated on a main highway in the east end of High River, still makes custom saddles and other leatherwork in what is pretty much a one-man operation. Coming to High River in 1978, Eberle has been working at the trade which he obviously enjoys since 1944.

Admitting laconically that he has “been here and there, off and on,” he refers to his work with Cliff Ketcham of Wyoming with enthusiasm, and obviously is happiest when working in specialized carving. When talking with Eberle in his little shop, one has the feeling that he would much prefer to be getting on with his work, but with the innate courtesy of an old-time working cowboy he tries not to let this reluctance to be interviewed become too obvious. But the pictures of saddles on the walls of his office show where his interests lie. Mention one of these, and the conversation becomes animated.

Saddlemakers have their own strong likes and preferences, and like any other artist, they become willing to talk about their craft.

Matt Eberle Saddlery has no address listed in the phone book; only a telephone number and a mailing address. That knowledgeable customers can find their way without a road map is evident in the variety of saddles brought in for repairs. A lady's side saddle, a European riding saddle, a well worn modern roping saddle, and some earlier models which would bring envy to the hearts of an early saddle buff

can be seen waiting for Eberle's attention.

Matt Eberle, the last of High River's individual artisans in his craft, typifies the art which once made the locality noted with its slogan “Canada's Saddle Centre”.



Matt Eberle surrounded by the tools of the Leather Trade in his High River workshop.

Early Businesses Built the Community

Bradley's is not only the oldest continuous business firm in High River; it also has played an integral part in the life of the community. Like Tom Baird's shoe shop, its location was one of the early influences in establishing a Village site. Along with the blacksmith shop, the Trading Company and the Stopping House, these localized central services pretty well decided the site of the town.

With town growth came the restaurants, the livery barns, (usually with adjoining stables) and the veterinarians' offices often located in a small corner of the livery barns.

Once the needs of the essential horses were cared for, the towns then catered to the needs of the ranchers and farmers. The saloons, law offices, doctor's office, machine shops and additional services quickly followed.

Originally, many of the hostlers, tailors, blacksmiths and horse doctors were retirees from the North West Mounted Police. They, accompanied with others of similar interests, settled and promoted the small towns of the Canadian west. Sometimes they would originate operations from the workman's homestead, but quickly began to gather together to form the nuclei of the first communities.

Blacksmiths

Usually early cowboys were their own farriers, and the ranch headquarters had versatile employees who could do necessary blacksmith work such as replacing the metal "tires" on wagon wheels, etc. As the range land became

more settled, the demand for blacksmith work increased.

One of the early blacksmiths was "Big Jim" McDonagh, a tough character who appeared, for reasons known only to himself, out of nowhere in 1884. Big Jim settled first on the Keystone ranch west of High River, moving the following year to the Cottonwood. He was a blacksmith with a diversified operation, running a bunch of horses and about 300 head of cattle. His ranch hands were known to disappear mysteriously.

Big Jim evidently operated a blacksmith shop at The Crossing, which he sold in 1890 to devote more time to his other interests. Regarding these, a story was told in the writer's family of a visit Big Jim once made to my grandfather, who was Justice of the Peace, in the 1890s. Big Jim's complaint went as follows:

"Mr. Magistrate. Tell your friend Sergeant Dee (of the North West Mounted Police) he is wasting his time hiding in the bush on Big Jim's place at night. Tell your friend, Mr. Magistrate, he won't catch Big Jim rustling any cattle by hiding around at night. Mr. Magistrate, you can tell your friend Big Jim doesn't rustle cattle at night. Big Jim doesn't need to steal in the dark. Mr. Magistrate, you can tell your policeman friend Big Jim does all his rustling in the daytime."

When asked, years later, whether Sergeant Dee ever caught Big Jim the answer was, "Nope. All the Sergeant caught was a cold."

Big Jim's successors in blacksmithing appear to have

Dad Partridge

General Blacksmith and
Wheelwright

Come once, come always;
might as well let me cheat
you as anyone else.

God Save the King



John Brown



Moore's Blacksmith Shop.

paid fuller attention to their trade. Jim was killed in 1898.

The forge at The Crossing was purchased in 1890 by Sam Heslip, an Ontario smithy, who sold it in 1900 to go into the hardware business. William Twiss purchased the shop. Various owners continued the business, located quite near Baird's shoe shop, one name being recalled being Billy Smith. Harry Baines Jr. was the last owner, selling the premises to Foothills Municipal District whose business office now occupies the site.

Some of the previous blacksmiths were Fred King and Tom Patterson. On the east side of the tracks an early picture shows Moore's Blacksmith Shop. Undoubtedly there were others. Bill Mower is another name recalled. Usually known as Dirty Bill, polite small boys of an earlier era were known to address him as "Mr. Dirty Bill".

Youngsters of the 1920s remember the fascination of visiting Dad Partridge's shop on what is now Fifth Avenue West. If "Dad" Partridge had any other name, there wasn't a kid in town who heard it. He was a practical joker, and when photographer Ray Lane startled everyone with his "trick photography" of Partridge evidently wheeling Partridge in his own wheelbarrow, "Dad" played the joke to the hilt. There were small boys who for years were convinced there were twin Partridge brothers, one of whom always happened to be absent during a youngster's visit.

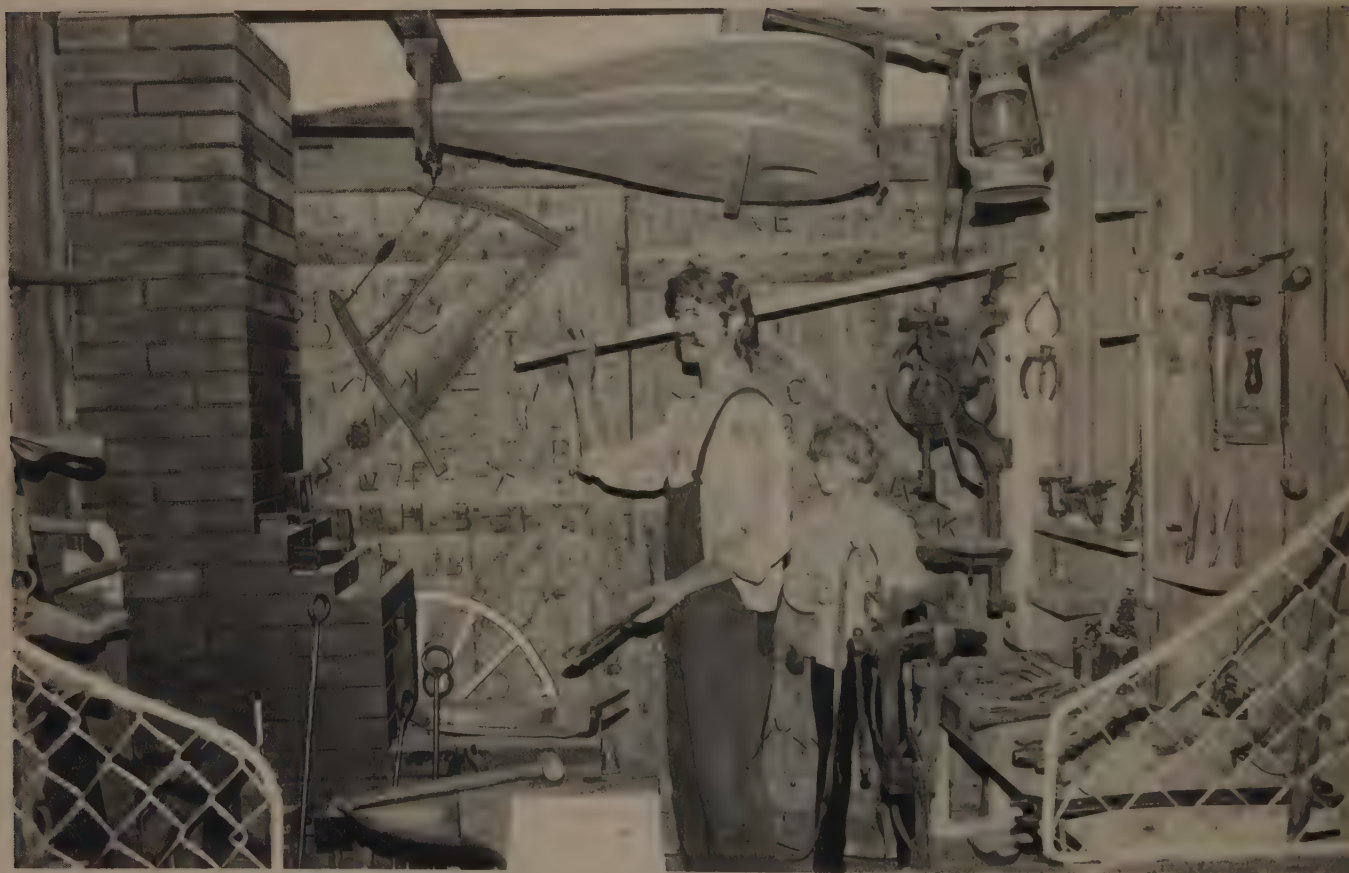
Also a stopping point of interest for many years was John Brown's shop on Macleod Trail near 6th Avenue. Brown's branding irons were in demand, and invariably he tried them out on the wooden doors to his shop before delivering the irons to his customers. More than one set of doors were worn out in the process.

Fortunately, someone had the foresight to rescue the last set when the old building was torn down. With the disappearance of Brown's shop, and Harry Baines' retirement, the old-time blacksmith is practically a thing of the past. While there are one or two private forges in use around the country, most rural spreads have family members who are expert at acetylene welding as part of the machinery main-

tenance operation.

Farriers are more in demand, and today there are district women proficient in this trade.

But the closest thing to the old-time blacksmith shop is the display at High River's Museum on the Highwood.



The Early Tailors

One of the distinctive things about early pictures of ranch round-ups, dipping bees, tally counting, even branding is the dress worn by the rangemen. Light shirt under sleeveless vests were seen frequently, the neckerchief, the hat and boots were standard but the ranch owner and the manager very frequently is seen wearing a three piece suit. And those low on the hips pants were not a common sight. A man who was going to be sitting in the saddle comfortably all day wore well fitted, high waisted trousers.

Travelling by horse and buggy, salesmen in the early part of the century would visit ranches to provide essentials like socks, underwear and gloves, but for the most part the rancher and cowboy made periodic trips to town to buy his needs. This included the conviviality of the local meeting place.

The men going east or to the British Isles for their winter visits, sometimes to acquire a bride, first visited the local tailor. High River by 1910 had two such establishments advertising, MacKenzie and Morasch, and J.H. Golightly and D.T. Fyffe. All but Golightly did not stay long, and Jim Golightly in 1909 built a two storey house on Macleod Trail and 6th Avenue where he raised his family. The house still stands.

Jim Golightly the tailor later was joined by his brother Russ, and their hand-made suits were a "must" for the well dressed man for decades. As the town grew, men's stores advertised "semi-tailored", but Golightly the tailor was a local tradition.

The young blades of the ranches by 1900 were riding to church socials in all the formality of cowboy boots, striped trousers, cut-away coats, starched white shirts and immaculate collars and cuffs (kept in pristine condition courtesy of the local Chinese laundries) and, of course, the inevitable stiff brimmed stetson of the style worn by the Mounted Police.

Formal attire for evening wear spread to the town's so-

cial events as High River grew but Golightly's success and reputation began with the ranchman. One of that fraternity, it is said, brought in a pair of "levis" comfortable as riding pants, which Golightly ripped apart, studied carefully, and henceforth became his pattern for dress pants which also would be comfortable when worn in the saddle.

For many years it was standard practice for local businessmen — even a Senator or two — to write Golightly the Tailor once or twice a year and order the requisite number of suits, sight unseen. Golightly undoubtedly kept an eye on spreading waistlines and made his allowances for same, but the customer was both dependent and satisfied.

Carefully cut western wear remains popular for two reasons. If made correctly, it is comfortable. Also it reflects the tradition of a proud life style. It is more than a two-week aberration of Stampede week — for the knowing customer and the wise buyer.

Suits For Young Men And Men Who Stay Young

We have gone our limit to get variety in clothing material and if we do say it ourselves we have in stock Tweeds that are hard to duplicate. You'll find the most desirable All-Wool weaves in these suits; the newest colorings and patterns. The choice is very unusual—and every suit is guaranteed to your satisfaction, to the last day's wear or your money back.

J. H. GOLIGHTLY

Merchant Tailor - - High River, Alberta

The Souvenir Coasters

*(Reprinted in part through permission of
The High River Times)*

With the Hon. Peter Lougheed's departure from the political field it is appropriate his involvement with High River's official symbol, The Medicine Tree, be mentioned. Not that Peter Lougheed is aware he had an indirect influence on global promotion of our unique and official logo. But he did.

In the 1960s this area was asked to host an annual breakfast at a political convention in Calgary's Palliser hotel. Every town in the constituency had some sort of semi-official logo except us. Local boosters decided this should be remedied in future.

Eamor's Saddlery had quite a bit of scrap leather each year. Felmer Eamor was approached. Intrigued with the idea of a coaster for community promotion, employee Art Robillard was urged to work on a design. Several were submitted, the excess frills eliminated, until Felmer, Art and this writer made a final selection.

Felmer had a fibreglass mould made. (Numerous dies have since been worn out in the coaster production process.)

The Times printed labels explaining the The Medicine Tree history. Eamor employees, chiefly Jack Telfer, stamped out the coasters in their spare time.

Originally priced at 10¢, they became in such demand that the late Clark Colwell volunteered to take over the task of stamping. Chamber of Commerce treated the product with the required gluey lacquer and affixed the labels. This chore more recently has been taken over by the seniors at the Friendship Centre, with now retired Telfer once again in charge.

Within ten years the coasters had been distributed world wide, with the possible exception of Red China. (This has since been rectified.) Diligent Women's Institute of the World members carried them to world conferences, infiltrating the High River copyrighted souvenir into Russia and the Far East.

It was estimated that in the first decade enough leather had been spread world wide in this manner to cover a herd of 40 cattle.

Designs and prices have changed with the times, but the souvenir remains popular. Considerable appreciation must go to Eamor's Saddlery and their present owners for this unique method of providing coverage for this district's distinctive souvenir.

*Jack Tefler displays some of
the coaster designs he has
helped to make.*





THE MEDICINE TREE

Years ago, the Indians of this area noticed the unusual formation of this tree . . . marked the double trunk and the twin growth of its main limbs. They accepted it as an indication of Good Medicine and whenever in this area set up camp under its benevolent shade, and offered their prayers asking for Good Medicine in their efforts.

Today the tree is in High River Park where it will be preserved as a reminder of those days — not too long ago — when Indians called this land their own . . . and thanked their own particular spirits through the Medicine Tree for the blessings of a good land.

(The High River Times)





Dad Partridge & Dad Partridge.



A harness maker's dream.



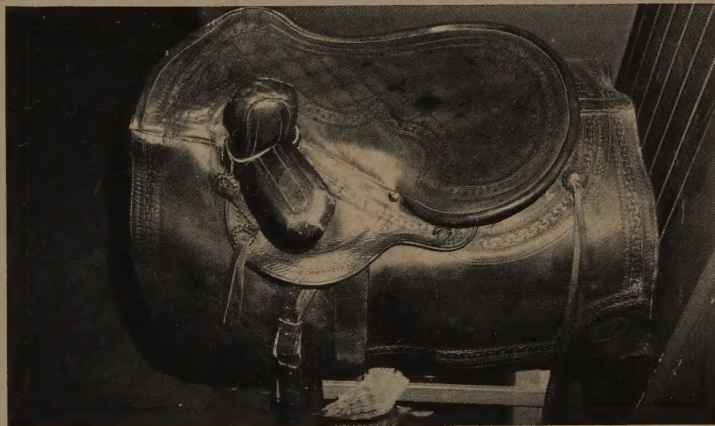
Mr. "B" has worn many faces.

*Floyd Haynes
with Skipper
Alberta 30 mile
Sask. 20 mile
race champions.*

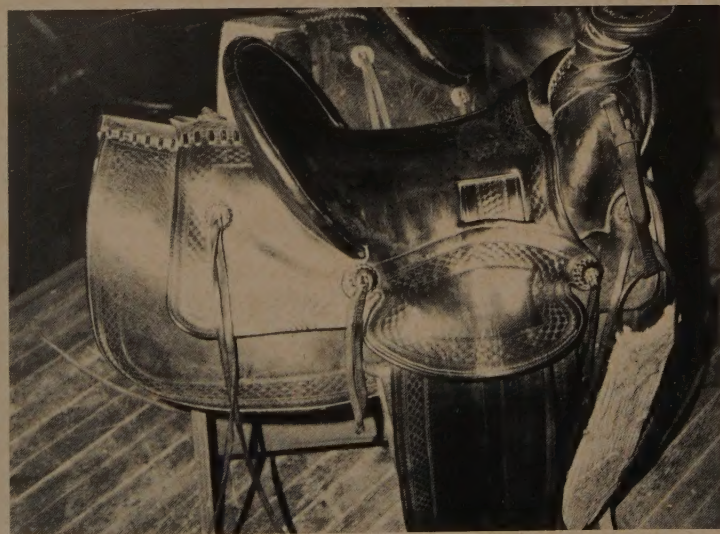




Copper toed boots were handed down from one generation to another.



Ladies side saddle on display in High River Museum.



Saddle on display in High River Museum.

Correct



Fashion



Evening Dress

(Formal)

Coat, The Swallowtail. **Overcoat**, Inverness, Chesterfield, or fur-lined Great-Coat. **Waistcoat**, Single-breasted of white silk, linen or pique. **Trousers**, same material as coat. **Shirt**, plain white linen with attached cuffs. **Collar**, Poke Wing or Straight-Stander. **Cravat**, white linen or silk. **Gloves**, white or pearl kid. **Jewelry**, Shirt-studs and link cuff-buttons of pearl or moonstone. **Boots**, Patent leather pumps, or patent leather button shoes with black kid tops.

Evening Dress

(Informal)

Coat, The Dress Sack of black or grey material. **Overcoat**, Covert, Chesterfield or fur-lined Great-Coat. **Waistcoat**, A delicate shade of silk or linen. **Trousers**, Same material as coat. **Hat**, The Black Derby. **Shirt**, white, plain or pleated bosom, and attached cuffs. **Collar**, Wing or Highband Turn-over. **Cravat**, black or grey silk. **Gloves**, grey suede, or silk. **Jewelry**, gold shirt-studs and link cuff-buttons. **Boots**, patent leather, kid tops, buttoned Pumps or Oxfords.

A Most Complete and Well Assorted Stock of Everything for Men to Wear. We make a Specialty of High Grade, Union Made Work Clothes.

E. G. & F. H. BROWN

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High River Museum
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Rainbow Esso
Royal Bank of Canada, High River Branch
The Quill Stationers
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Town of High River



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Back cover: courtesy of T. Dawson Photo/Graphics.

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The Highwood River flowing Northeast.

*UC-629-679-